

PROGRAM POLICY COORDINATION WORKGROUP MINUTES

**March 11, 2004
GEF III, Room 041**

Attendees:

Carol Medaris, WCCF
Shirin Cabraal, LAW
Jonathan Bader, WISCAP
Michelle Pauser, DHFS/Call Center
Scott Riedasch, BHCE/DHCF
Kathy Judd, Dane County/State Training
Sheryl Siegl, Winnebago County DHS
John LaPhilliph, BHCE/DHCF
Stacia Jankowski, DHFS/BIMA
Jon Janowski, MHTF (by phone)

Mike McKenzie, DHFS/BHCE
Sue Moline-Larson, LOPP
Sara Edmonds, DHFS/BHCE
Tadesse Mengesha, DWD/DWS/EPS
Corry White, Covering Kids & Families-WI
Pam Kiern, BHCE/CARES
Michael Jacob, Covering Kids & Families-WI
Mal Jones, DHFS/BHCE
Jayne Wanless, DHFS/BHCE
Dave Hippler, DHFS/BHCE

DHFS Website for Advocates

Dave Hippler

Dave Hippler from the DHFS, BHCE Communications Section shared a draft of a website that is being developed for use by advocate agencies. He is looking for feedback and suggestions from advocate staff in order to maximize the usefulness of the site. Jonathon Bader suggested grouping information related to non-citizens under a separate heading, including local agency locations where applications are accepted, and including websites for other programs – not just IM programs to create a “hub” to help identify all services available for families. Sheryl Siegl indicated that local agencies may have developed their own websites, so links to those sites would also be useful. Carol Medaris suggested adding links to CTS and Kinship Care information. Dave indicated that although this website may be limited to DHFS program and service information, he welcomes all feedback and he can be reached at (608) 261-8384, or email him at hipplDC@dhfs.state.wi.us. The draft can be viewed at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/em/advocates.htm>

Medical Assistance for Released Inmates

John LaPhilliph

John LaPhilliph reported that this initiative has been temporarily delayed since DOC requires more detailed procedures related to SSI application requirements and an MOU. However, The SSI application process at DOC is scheduled to begin in April for potentially eligible inmates who are scheduled to be released in 6 months. They expect that the SSI application will be ready for submission to SSA/DDB approximately 90 days prior to the inmate's scheduled release date. Any applications that may require processing by local agencies would not be sent to them until late August or early Sept. with the goal of getting these applications to the local agencies approximately 3 weeks ahead of time. An Ops Memo will be issued closer to the time these applications could start being delivered to the local agencies. DOC anticipates that only a small number of these applications will require local agency processing, however process and procedure requirements are being developed for those situations.

Reduced Reporting for Medicaid

John LaPhilliph

John also reported that he is currently working on an issue paper regarding reduced reporting requirements for Medicaid. A cost analysis still needs to be done in order to analyze the possibilities for this initiative. He will report to this committee as progress is made on this issue.

Funeral & Cemetery Aids Program

Scott Riedasch

Scott handed out and discussed a draft program proposal for the Funeral and Cemetery Aids Program. A copy of the proposal is attached to these minutes and includes a draft Reimbursement Request. Carol Medaris suggested that the language regarding requirements for estate funding availability be in a larger font size. Sheryl Siegl suggested that information about applying for retroactive MA coverage be added. Scott welcomes any feedback on the proposal. He can be reached by email at riedasa@dhfs.state.wi.us. Scott will be presenting this program proposal to the large IMAC group. The possibilities for coverage of the anticipated budget shortfall for this program for state fiscal year 2004 is also being discussed.

TFS and Reduced Reporting Updates

Jayne Wanless and Sara Edmonds

Jayne reported TFS moved smoothly into production on Feb. 27th and more than 700 TFS cases are already scheduled to begin April 1st. TFS will provide a frozen FS benefit allotment for 5 months to households whose W2 or Tribal TANF cash payments have ended. Most of these will automatically be set up in the CARES system without worker intervention. However, there are some instances, particularly with Tribal TANF recipient cases, where worker action is needed to establish TFS correctly. It is also critical that W2 payments be opened and closed correctly by FEPs to ensure that TFS opens correctly. Many cases were checked by state staff and a few problems have been identified that will be fixed later this spring or early summer. For the most part this project is a great success considering the complexity and the scope of the initiative, and will greatly benefit families moving from welfare to work.

Sara reported that Phase IIA of reduced change reporting went into production on Feb. 27th with no major problems. Phase IIA provides 12 month FS certification periods for most FS households at the point of application or recertification. Process and procedure requirements for Phase IIB are in development. Phase IIB will include the actual receipt and processing requirements for interim report forms in the local agencies. FS recipients will now be required to complete one face-to face interview per year, and will be required to submit one interim change report form per year to maintain their FS eligibility. The Phase IIB workgroup thanks those from this committee who provided feedback on the draft interim report and the draft reminder notice that will be sent to FS recipients. Local agency training for Phase IIB will be crucial for successful implementation and will be accomplished through distance learning.

Program Participation Grant Project Update

Mike McKenzie

Mike gave the following report provided by Autumn Arnold, the project policy and evaluation analyst.

"Last month, we compiled the results from five focus groups and 60 client surveys and used the input to develop detailed software requirements for the self-assessment website. The focus groups included:

- Milwaukee benefit recipients
- Low-income seniors in public housing
- TEFAP coordinators from CAP agencies
- Dane County pantries and service providers
- Tribal Medicaid outreach workers

We turned the requirements over to the Deloitte programming team on March 1st. They plan to have mock-ups by mid-April and a version of the software for testing in mid-July. The website should be ready for use by mid-August.

While they work on developing the software, we are working on selecting demonstration sites to help us evaluate different service delivery models. We hope to have the sites in place by June. The demonstration sites will include:

- 3-4 sites in Milwaukee, to be arranged through Hunger Task Force;
- Two Community Action Agencies
- At least three WIC sites
- At least four tribal health clinics

We're also working on a plan to market the tools and ensure that they reach a broad audience above and beyond the demonstration sites. "

Upcoming FS Projects

Mike McKenzie and Sara Edmonds

Work will begin soon on two new FS initiatives. Jayne Wanless will lead a project to develop a process where virtually all FS households will be considered as categorically eligible for benefits. At least 7 other States have already implemented this initiative known as "broad-based" categorical eligibility. By providing information and referral to TANF funded services available to anyone in the State, an individual or household can be defined as "authorized to receive" TANF services, thus categorically eligible for FS. When implemented, this policy will eliminate the asset and gross income tests for all FS households and will meet the DHFS goals of increased payment accuracy, reduced workload for local agencies, and increased customer access to the FS Program.

Work will also be started on the SSI Combined Application Project (SSI CAP) that will centralize, streamline, and simplify the FS eligibility and benefit determination for some SSI recipients. This project will require extensive system resources and will probably not be implemented until State year 2006, however planning will begin soon since the procedural requirements for FNS approval and outreach to the target population will also be somewhat extensive. We will be using the Texas SSI CAP as a model and we will receive feedback from the FNS national office on the project plan later this calendar year. Sara will be the project lead for this initiative.

Other

Shirin discussed the increased workload issues Milwaukee County is facing. As a result, applications may not be processed timely, and may be incorrectly denied or terminated. This has also been identified by DHFS as a problem with Family Care cases. Scott reported that monitoring of Family Care cases is currently being completed and will be expanded. DHFS management, including Cheryl McIlquham and Milwaukee County management, including Paula Lucey, have been meeting regularly to discuss these issues. Moving the ES staff back to the remodeled office building at 12th and Vliet should also help with address some of their challenges.

Next Meeting - Thursday, April 8, 2004 - 12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. at GEF III, Room 041